

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 as they appeared after the Amendment of November 8, 2005, were allowed in the Notice of Allowance and Notice of Allowability of May 22, 2006, with claims 1 and 21 being independent. In this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312, claims 1-2, 4, 9, 14, and 17 have been amended and claims 5-8, 15-16, and 19-21 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, such that claims 1-4, 9-14, and 17-18 are now pending, with claims 1, 9, and 17 being independent. No new matter is presented in this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312.

Claim Amendments

On June 7, 2006, Examiner Ashok Patel called the undersigned attorney and indicated that upon further review, he was of the opinion that some of allowed claims 1-21 were unpatentable over the prior art. The Examiner did not cite any references to support his position, but was of the opinion that he could find such references. Accordingly, the Examiner indicated that he would have to withdraw the application from issue and issue a new Office Action rejecting some of allowed claims 1-21 unless some of allowed claims 1-21 were canceled and other ones of allowed claims 1-21 were amended.

After a lengthy discussion, the Examiner and the undersigned attorney reached an agreement that if claims 5-8, 15-16, and 19-21 were canceled as they have been in this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312 and claims 1-2, 4, 9, 14, and 17 were amended as they have been in this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312, claims 1-4, 9-14, and 17-18 would be allowable and the application would not have to be withdrawn from issue. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 1-4, 9-14, and 17-18 are allowable, and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested.

The cancellation of claims 5-8, 15-16, and 19-21 and the amendment of claims 1-4, 9-14, and 17-18 in this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312 is not to be construed in any way as an abandonment by the applicant of any part of the subject matter of original claims 1-21, or as an admission on the applicant's part that the Examiner's position as expressed during the telephone interview on June 7, 2006, is in any way justified, or that any of claims 1-21 as they were allowed in the Notice of Allowance and Notice of Allowability of May 22, 2006, are in fact

unpatentable as alleged by the Examiner, particularly in light of the fact that the Examiner has not cited any references to support his position. Rather, the applicant considers all of claims 1-21 as they were allowed in the Notice of Allowance and Notice of Allowability of May 22, 2006, to be patentable, and has agreed to the claim cancellations and amendments presented in this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312 merely to avoid the necessity of withdrawing the application from issue. The applicant intends to file a continuation application directed to at least original claims 1, 5-8, 15-16, and 19-21 in the near future.

Entry of Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312

Since this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312 is being filed at the Examiner's request, it is submitted that entry of this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312 is proper, and it is respectfully requested that this Amendment After Allowance Under 37 CFR 1.312 be entered.

Conclusion

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application remains in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

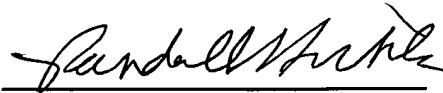
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after the filing of this paper, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with the filing of this paper, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

STEIN, MCEWEN & BUI, LLP

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